

REMARKS

The Examiner's Action mailed on November 1, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

Claims 1-12 are pending in the application, of which claims 4-12 are withdrawn. Claim 1 is independent claim. For at least the following reasons, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 as being anticipated by *Negishi* (U.S. Pat. 6,346,082). It is submitted that these claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited reference for at least the following reasons.

It is well settled that a reference may anticipate a claim within the purview of 35 U.S.C. § 102 only if all the features and all the relationships recited in the claim are taught by the reference structure either by clear disclosure or under the principle of inherency.

Independent claim 1 is directed to an air pressure-adjusting device for adjusting an air pressure of a container, which has an outlet for releasing air. The air pressure-adjusting device comprises a driving element, a shifting element, and a deformation element. The shifting element has a cavity. The shifting element is coupled to the driving element, and is driven by the driving element to make a displacement. The deformation element is disposed at the cavity of the shifting element. The deformation element exerts a force to cover partially or completely the outlet or deform into the cavity according to a degree of the displacement of the shifting element, and the deformation element controls the amount of air

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released from the container to adjust an air pressure in the container according to the force and the air pressure in the container.

Negishi discloses a sphygmomanometer having a casing, a valve element 23, and means 24 for driving that drives an opening/closure of the valve element 23. The driving means 24 includes a movable element 28. Movable element 28 has a shaft 28a formed at one end projecting into the casing, a flange 28b formed at the other end, and a small-diameter part 28c interposed therebetween. The small-diameter part 28c is formed at the side of shaft and flange 28b, and a coil 29 is fixed by one end thereof to be telescopically fitted onto a small-diameter part 28c (see col. 6, lines 50-52). A cylindrical pillar 38 is formed at the center of flange 28b on the opposite side to the side where shaft 28a and small-diameter part 28c are provided, and the valve element 23 surrounds the cylindrical pillar 38 (see col. 6, lines 8-10). When a drive current is applied to the coil, the movable element 28 and coil 29 are moved towards evacuation port 22, thereby causing valve element 23 that is mounted on the cylindrical pillar 38 to contact with the evacuation port 22 and to block this evacuation port 22.

The Examiner characterizes the small-diameter part 28c as being a cavity, and states that the valve element (element 23) is disposed at the small-diameter part (element 28c) of the shifting element (element 28). However, the small-diameter part 28c of *Negishi* is a cylindrical object formed on the side of the movable element, rather than a cavity. Accordingly, the small-diameter part 28c of *Negishi* is not a cavity, and *Negishi* therefore fails to disclose or suggest that the shifting element has a cavity. As stated above, the valve element 23, mounted on

the cylindrical pillar 38, is separated from the small-diameter part 28c by the flange 28b, rather than being disposed at the small-diameter part 28c of the movable element 28. On the other hand, the valve element 23 of *Negishi* is disposed at an even top surface of the cylindrical pillar 38 (see FIG.6), rather than at a cavity. Accordingly, the valve element of *Negishi* is not disposed at the small-diameter part 28c or a cavity. Thus, *Negishi* fails to disclose or suggest that the deformation element is disposed at the cavity of the shifting element. *Negishi* also fails to disclose or suggest that the deformation element exerts a force to deform into the cavity, since the valve element, which is relied on by the Examiner as the teaching of the deformation element, would not be disposed at the small-diameter part, which is relied on by the Examiner as the teaching of the cavity, and could not be deformed into the small-diameter part.

Further, *Negishi* fails to disclose or suggest that the deformation element exerts a force to cover partially or completely the outlet or deform into the cavity according to a degree of the displacement of the shifting element, and that the deformation element controls the amount of air released from the container to adjust an air pressure in the container according to the force and the air pressure in the container, as recited in claim 1. *Negishi* teaches that valve element 23 is formed with fine irregularities 23b on the surface facing the evacuation port 22 (see col. 5, lines 20-21 & FIG. 5-6). The opening/closure operation of evacuation port 22 is performed gradually due to the resilient deformation of irregularities 23b in the initial period of opening/closing, thereby allowing a pressure reduction operation with little fluctuation (see col. 8, lines 17-23). The fine irregularities

formed on the valve element provide precise control of the pressure reduction characteristic of the sphygmomanometer (col. 8, lines 49-54). *Negishi* therefore teaches that a way to control the air pressure is different from that recited by the claimed invention.

As such, it is submitted that claim 1, as well as claims 2-3 dependent therefrom, are patentably distinguishable over the cited reference. It therefore is requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Based on the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such a Notice, with allowed claims 1-3 earnestly solicited.

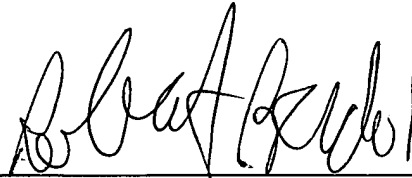
Should the Examiner feel that a conference would help to expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

Should any fee be required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 18-0002, and please advise us accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

January 31, 2007

Date



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